



How to Overcome Hatred

NOTHING is more degrading for an aspirant than to burden his mind with hatred. Hatred darkens the mirror of the mind, dissipates willpower, creates illusions, intensifies negative karmas, and leads one to manifold forms of misery. Reflect on the evils of hatred. If you continue to hate any person or object, you are filling your mind with impressions of impurity. This will render your intellect dull and you will be unable to reach higher states of consciousness because of the incapacity to practice spiritual reflection on the Higher Self. It is a disease of the astral body, and every effort must be directed towards its prevention as well as its cure.

What Causes Hatred?

Raja Yoga speaks of the five *kleshas* (afflictions of the *chitta* or mind-stuff): *avidya* (ignorance), *asmita* (egoism), *raga* (attachment), *dwesha* (hatred) and *abhinivesha* (clinging to life or fear of death). It is due to ignorance that the spirit identifies itself with the mind-stuff (thoughts, opinions, and beliefs about social and financial status, education, race, religion, identity, and history, etc.), thereby giving rise to egoism. As this sense of egoism is intensified, the mind begins to create impressions of attachment and hatred. Develop an insight into

the Law of Karma. It is your past negative karma and hidden complexes that lie within your own mind that places you in adverse conditions and prompts others to harm you. Therefore, when provoked by others, instead of developing ill will towards them, turn your mind to the source of all pain—ignorance—and endeavor to remove it by devotion and wisdom.

How Hatred is Triggered

Whenever a person finds objects or circumstances pleasant, the mind develops the will “May I enjoy the object or circumstance again and again.” If one allows the impressions of pleasure to intensify, a strong attachment arises. If there is any obstruction to the enjoyment of pleasure, or if the object of your affection gives rise to pain, one develops the will, “I must remove this object, person or circumstance; I must overcome it or destroy it.” The impressions arising out of painful experiences thus transform into hatred.

What Happens When Hatred Runs Rampant?

As the mind continues to flow along these currents of *raga* and *dvesha*, it creates karma leading to repeated embodiments. Thus, an embodied soul becomes so dependent upon the physical body and its identity that the very thought of death fills his mind with fear.

Manifestations of Hatred

Hatred is at the root of many evils and has many apparent causes in society. Even those who are highly educated suffer from this malady. Preachers of one religion hate those of other religions. People of one race hate people of another race and this is well-known in many countries. One may hate a person with no rational basis—

because he reminds him of a bully from his past. This negative quality manifests in many forms: petty-mindedness, anger, jealousy, contempt, prejudice, sneering, taunting, judging, ridiculing, mocking, cynicism, and frowning are all different expressions of hatred.

The Ideal Attitude

Even in cases where loathing seems to have a rational basis, one must place before himself the ideal taught by Buddha and Jesus, and refuse to indulge in hatred. Endeavor to develop good will and compassion even towards those who are bent upon ill will. If hatred is left unchecked, it leads to violence. Remember the words of Lord Jesus: “Ye have heard that it hath been said, ‘Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy.’ But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you. That ye may be the children of your Father in Heaven.” (Matthew 5: 43-45)

Directing love and good will even towards those who are crude and inimical is indeed supernatural. But unless one upholds this saintly ideal, he cannot rise beyond the normal level of human consciousness. Present before yourself the lofty idea of becoming a Saint or a Sage.

What is the Cure?

Take recourse to *Pratipaksha Bhavana*—adapting the mind to the positive qualities that are contrary to hatred and its ramifications. Cultivate the qualities of self-reflection, humility and sincerity. Rather than focusing on the negative attributes of others, direct your mind to the negative qualities within yourself, such as pride and vanity, and remove them. Practice disciplined speech, humility, understanding, patience, compassion, good-heartedness, and love. When the mind has no place for hatred, it becomes filled with the

luminosity of Divine Love. Such a mind is an inexhaustible source of joy, peace, harmony and Divine inspiration.

Selflessly serve others. Do not constantly engross yourself in thoughts of only pleasing yourself, but rather find happiness in being a spiritual inspiration for others. The joy arising out of serving humanity far excels the joy derived from serving oneself. The mind must become accustomed to this form of *sattwa* (pure joy).

Practice the mystic art of resignation to the Divine Self, God. There is an excellent *Puranic* prayer that can be of immense help in changing one's attitude: "Oh Lord, just as the mind of the worldly person runs after the perishable objects of the world, in the same way, may my mind ever flow towards You." If one were to live in the spirit of this prayer, the mind would be so filled with lofty sentiments that it would not have room for hatred or its evil companions.

Reflections to Help Transcend Hatred

Think of the illusoriness of attachment and hatred. Objects of the world do not give rise to permanent joy. They do not even exist in the manner that they are recognized by the mind and senses. Essentially, they are *Brahman* expressing through different names and forms. When you develop a deep insight into the illusoriness of objects, you will then understand that not only is there nothing in this world on which you should pin your faith upon and become attached, but also there is nothing in this world which you should hate with a deep-rooted sense of ill will.

Allow the impressions of attachment and hatred to fade from your unconscious. Since the sense of ego nourishes these two currents of the mind, practice *Atma Vichar*—enquiry into the nature of the Self. If you continue to run after the whims of the ego, you will always be a slave to your mind and senses. But when you

learn the art of rising beyond your ego through meditation, devotion, and self-effacing surrender to God, you become the master of your lower self and begin to commune with the Cosmic Self. It is then that hatred becomes sublimated into the spiritual force of love.

Hatred, like other negative qualities, exists in different stages. Even when one seems to be free of hatred, his unconscious continues to hold on to it in a dormant state. Therefore, a Yogi seeks out the subtlest trace of hatred from within his unconscious mind and scorches it by the luminous vision of the Self.

Sages and Saints

The impressions of attachment and hatred are like roasted seeds in Sages and Saints. Although they seem to manifest these qualities to some extent, they are inwardly untouched by them. A saintly personality develops attachment towards things that are Divine and "hatred" towards things that are undivine—towards hatred itself!

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